

I support media diversity

I am writing to you to comment on Docket No. 02-277, re: the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

I am appalled that the FCC is considering making ownership rules less stringent. Throughout our society we see the results of consolidations, acquisitions, and mergers; while the nearest drugstore may carry ten "different" chapsticks, upon closer inspection, they are all made by Blistex. Similarly, I seem to have many choices of radio stations; my first clue to the contrary was when I realized that several (all Clear Channel) went to commercial or news at the same time.

When I obtained a mortgage thru Great Western, I also got a "lifetime" free checking account; now, Washington Mutual tells me they don't have to honor that, since they were not the original grantors of the mortgage. With the consolidations in banking and telecommunications, I feel as if my choices have lessened.

A free society is based on the ability of its people to be fully informed, and to have access to that information with as little filtering as possible. The ability of the messenger to disseminate information is truly compromised when there is great inequality between the sources. I have seen small, local newspapers (i.e. Palo Alto Times) go out of business, and it is truly a loss to the local community. The news becomes homogenized, and the people lose a bit of their sense of community. It's bad enough already to realize that the person reading the local traffic report on the radio may not even be broadcasting from your own state; don't make it worse.

You have a responsibility to the American people, NOT the American corporations. Do the right thing.

Sincerely, Catherine M. White